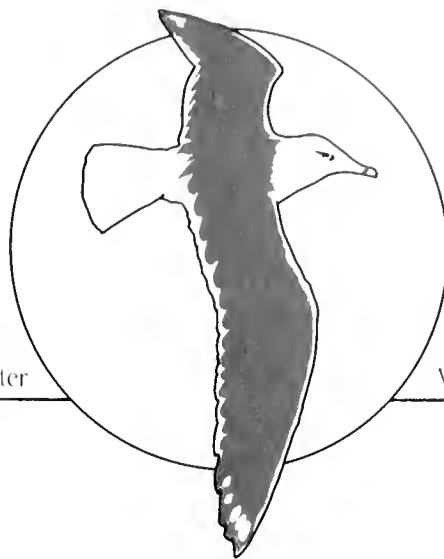


# The Gull



Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 80, No. 5 May 1998

## Credit Not Given

by Harry Fuller

**L**ewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*) is the lone bird named for one of America's greatest explorers, Meriwether Lewis (1774-1809). This bird is a resident in the forests, foothills and riparian woods of western North America. The colors of its unusual plumage include pink, silvery tints, and a glossy green-black. Lewis described the belly of this new bird as *"a curious mixture of white and blood red which has much the appearance of having been artificially painted or stained of that colour."* Bay Area birders can most easily find this bird on the upper wooded slopes of Mount Hamilton, south of Livermore.

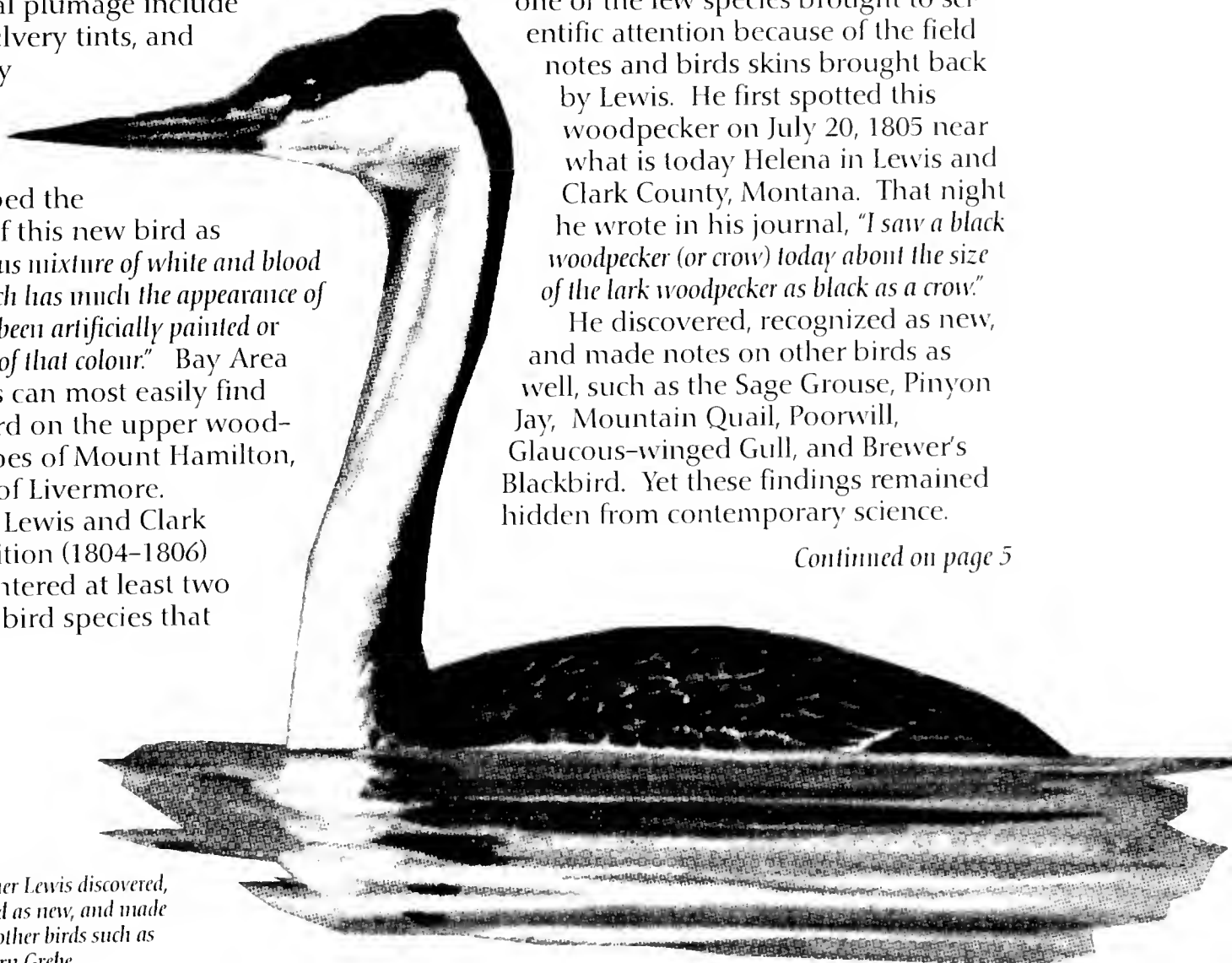
The Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1806) encountered at least two dozen bird species that

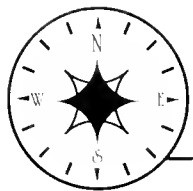
were unknown to science. Specimens of most of these birds were collected and carefully described by Lewis. In spite of his best efforts, though, many of these birds remained unknown to science until later expeditions into the American west. Lewis's Woodpecker is one of the few species brought to scientific attention because of the field notes and birds skins brought back by Lewis. He first spotted this woodpecker on July 20, 1805 near what is today Helena in Lewis and Clark County, Montana. That night he wrote in his journal, *"I saw a black woodpecker (or crow) today about the size of the lark woodpecker as black as a crow."*

He discovered, recognized as new, and made notes on other birds as well, such as the Sage Grouse, Pinyon Jay, Mountain Quail, Poorwill, Glaucous-winged Gull, and Brewer's Blackbird. Yet these findings remained hidden from contemporary science.

*Continued on page 5*

*Meriwether Lewis discovered, recognized as new, and made notes on other birds such as the Western Grebe.*





# Field Trips Calendar

**G**AS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

*See the April Gull for complete details for trips from May 2 through May 16, and the June 5-7 Yosemite trip.*

## **SATURDAY, MAY 2 SUNOL REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 8:30 a.m. inside the park entrance at the parking lot on the left. Take I-680 south, turn off at Calaveras Road. (The freeway sign is marked Calaveras Rd., Dumbarton Bridge, Calif. 84.) Go south (left) and follow the signs to Sunol Regional Park, about 5 miles. Bring lunch and liquids in preparation for a 4-5 mile walk. Heavy rain cancels. Leaders: Gloria Markowitz and Ken Ackerman (415) 892-2910 \$(\*)

## **SAT.-SUN., MAY 2, 3 MAYACAMAS AUDUBON PRESERVE - CAMPING.**

Leader: George Peyton. Call (510) 444-3131 (weekdays) for reservations. \$

## **SUNDAY, MAY 3 STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna. (415) 566-3241.

## **SUNDAY, MAY 3 WILDCAT CANYON REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 8 a.m. by the Arlington Clubhouse on Arlington Blvd. (next to the tennis courts between Brewster Dr. and Thors Bay Rd.) in El Cerrito. Leader: Malcolm Sproul. (510) 376-8945. (\*)

## **SATURDAY, MAY 9 BRIONES REGIONAL PARK.**

For this half-day trip meet at 8 a.m.

at the west entrance off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. Leader: Bob Lewis. (510) 845-5001. \$

## **SUNDAY, MAY 10 MT. DIABLO STATE PARK.**

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Rock City parking lot, 1 mile after passing through the South Gate entrance. Take Hwy. 24 to Walnut Creek, then go south on I-680 to Danville. Take the Mt. Diablo Rd. exit, go left under the freeway and follow the signs to Mt. Diablo State Park. Leader: David George. (510) 339-6848. \$(\*)

## **WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 MINI-TRIP TO BRIONES REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the west entrance to the park, off Bear Creek Road, at the parking area on the left, just beyond the fee booth. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301, and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$

## **SATURDAY, MAY 16 BOUVERIE AUDUBON PRESERVE (NEAR GLEN ELLEN).**

To reserve a space call (707) 938-4554 ASAP. Directions and information about the meeting time and place will be mailed to participants.

## **SATURDAY, MAY 30 SIBLEY VOLCANIC REGIONAL PRESERVE, OAKLAND.**

Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the preserve parking lot. Sibley is a gem in the Oakland hills where one can see birds not commonly found so close to a major metropolitan area. At this time of the year, this tiny park should be alive with singing California Thrashers, Rufous-Crowned and Lark Sparrows, Western Bluebirds and more, and with the early start, we may get lucky and see an owl. Directions: From Highway 24, take the Fish Ranch Road exit east of the Caldecott Tunnel. Continue 0.8 miles to Grizzly Peak Blvd. Turn left and go 2.4 miles on Grizzly Peak to Skyline Blvd. Turn left on Skyline and proceed to the park entrance, on the left. A map is recommended. Leader: Jennifer Matkin (415) 681-6926.

## **FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 5-7 YOSEMITE'S BIRD LIFE.**

Meet at the Big Oak Flat entrance on Friday, June 5, at 3 p. m., and on Saturday, June 6, at 7 a.m. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow behind the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) The meeting place is the large parking lot 100 yards inside the park entrance on Hwy. 120 (50 miles from Yosemite Valley). (See April Gull for campground information.) Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots (wet meadows) and a large flashlight for owling. Be prepared to pack a lunch and walk about 6 miles. Leader: Dave Quady (510) 704-9353. \$ (\*)

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 6 HAYWARD SHORELINE.**

Meet at 9 a.m. at the visitor center on Breakwater Avenue for this half-day trip. Take I-880 to Hwy. 92 (Hayward/San Mateo Bridge exit). Exit at Clawiter, cross Clawiter onto Breakwater Court. Turn left onto Breakwater Ave. There will be breeding swallows, baby stilts and avocets, and who knows what else. Beginners welcome. (Visitor center opens at 10 a.m. No other facilities.) Leader: Bob Lewis (510) 845-5001.

## **SUNDAY, JUNE 7 STRYBING ARBORETUM.**

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna. (415) 566-3241.

## **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 MINI-TRIP TO REDWOODS REGIONAL PARK.**

Meet in the park at 9:30 a.m. Take the Warren Freeway (Hwy. 13), exit onto Redwood Road, and proceed east about 5 miles to Redwood Gate, southern entrance to the park. Meet just inside the small parking lot on the left. We should see Black-headed

Grosbeak, Swainson's Thrush, Bullock's Oriole, and Solitary, Hutton's, and Warbling Vireos. Bring lunch. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. \$(\*)

**SUNDAY, JUNE 14  
LUNDY CANYON (NEAR MONO LAKE).**

Lundy Canyon is a little-known canyon north of Mono Lake. It is a place of beauty serenity and it abounds with birdsong (and birds) in the spring. Rusty Scalf knows Lundy Canyon well, as he has surveyed this area for the annual Mono Lake Breeding Bird Survey (see following) for many years, and this year, he will introduce those who make the trek to its wonder. We should see yellow and MacGillivray's warblers, several species of flycatchers, red-naped and Williamson's sapsuckers, and more. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Mono County Park parking lot, near the bathrooms. Mono County Park is at the northern edge of Mono Lake, off Hwy 395. Bring lunch and liquids for this all-day trip. Leader: Rusty Scalf (510) 666-9936.

**SATURDAY, JUNE 13 MONO COUNTY  
BREEDING BIRD SURVEY.**

If you are planning on making the Lundy Canyon trip, perhaps you may wish to consider participating in the annual Mono Lake Breeding Bird Survey, to take place this year on Saturday June 13. For information, call Emilie Strauss (510) 540-8749.

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 20-21  
YUBA PASS.**

On Saturday meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Yuba Pass summit parking area (Hwy. 49), 19 miles east of Sierra City. Take I-80 to Truckee, go north on Hwy. 89 to Sierraville, and take Hwy. 49 west to Yuba Summit. (Or, take Hwy. 49 north-east from Auburn for a slower but more scenic route.) We will bird the mountain areas for summer residents, including dippers, flycatchers, warblers, and Calliope Hummingbirds. On Sunday meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 49 and 89 (by the sawmill) about one mile north of Sattley. We will caravan to Sierra Valley, looking for birds of the eastern Sierra, including White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Cranes, Sage Thrashers, and

Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Camping is available at the following U.S. Forest Service campgrounds off Hwy. 49: Wild Plum (elev. 3300 ft.) 2 mi. east of Sierra City, and Chapman Creek (elev. 5800 ft.) 8 mi. east of Sierra City. Lodging is available at Sierra Chalet (530) 862-1110, Buttes Motel (530) 862-1170, Herrington's Sierra Pines (530) 862-1151, Bassett's Station Motel (530) 862-1297, Sierra Buttes Inn Motel (530) 862-1191, Yuba River Inn (530) 862-1122, and Busch & Herringbone Country Inn (530) 862-1501. (Check with proprietor for location of the motel or inn.) Leader: Peter Allen (415) 892-8063. (\*)

**FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 26-28  
LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.**

Join the Murphy family on the annual GGAS family camping excursion to Lassen. In past years we have seen Willow, Hammond's and Dusky flycatchers, Black Swift, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Townsend's Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Calliope Hummingbird, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and most of the warblers and finches that breed in the mountains.

The more serious birders will meet at the Manzanita Lake Campgrounds store at 6:30 a.m. on Friday and again on Sunday. We will bird around the lake for 2-3 hours, return to camp for breakfast, then rendezvous again at the store at 10:30 a.m. for another outing. The Friday outing will be a leisurely hike of about 3 miles on one of Lassen's beautiful trails. We may climb as much as 700 ft. Wear sturdy shoes and bring lunch and liquids. Suntan lotion, a hat, mosquito repellent, and warm clothing may also be necessary.

Saturday is a special day. We will meet by the camp store at 7:30 a.m. and caravan north to Burney Falls, Fall River Valley, and Baum Lake. Bring lunch and liquids. This all-day excursion of about 100 miles will include a 2 or 3 hour swim at Lake Britton while watching for Bald Eagles. (If you forget your swimsuit, the trails at Burney Park offer a wonderful diversion, and fishermen can try their luck in some of northern California's finest trout streams.) Since this is a long and tiring day, we suggest a get-together for din-

ner at a nearby restaurant instead of returning to the campstove. Stop at our campsite for further information. We will have a campfire every evening beginning at 8 p.m. Bring your own chair (and a cup of wine if you choose). We will provide hot water for tea or coffee. Check the campground bulletin boards or the office at Hat Creek Resort for our poster, campsite number, and any last-minute changes in the schedule.

For the Sunday outing we will meet at 10:30 a.m. to drive through the park, making frequent stops for birding. We should reach the south entrance around 1 p.m., depending on how long we play in the snow at the summit. For this final event, bring warm gloves, a plastic trash bag for a mini-toboggan, and a camera.

From the Bay Area drive north on I-5 to its junction with Hwy. 44 in Redding. Go east on Hwy 44 to the northwest entrance of Lassen. Camping facilities are available at Manzanita Lake. Lodging is available about 15 miles north of the park at Hat Creek Resort, Old Station (530) 555-7121. Other information can be obtained from the park headquarters, Mineral, CA 96065. Leaders: Dan and Joan Murphy (415) 564-0074. \$(\*)

**PLAN AHEAD** for these two popular traditional GGAS trips, which are **by reservation only**:

**YOSEMITE ALPINE ECOLOGY.**

Probable dates: Sat.-Sun., August 1-2. Call leader, George Peyton, for information and reservations. (510) 444-5151, weekdays. \$(\*)

**BACKPACKING TRIP IN LASSEN  
VOLCANIC NATINAL PARK.**

Fri. - Mon., August 14-17. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. For details and reservations, call David Rice (510) 527-7210. \$(\*)

Trips marked with a (S) go to parks or other sites that require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (\*). See below. Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



Some birds are just plain ubiquitous, seeming to be absolutely everywhere. Case in point: flocks of blackbirds, mostly Brewer's with a mix of Red-winged. The farms in Sonoma County are literally covered with huge flocks. No doubt about their numbers holding fast. They consume large numbers of flies, crickets, grasshoppers, tent caterpillars, and aphids, as well as waste grain, seeds, and fruit. They are a farmer's friend, indeed!

The troupial family (named for the birds' habit of forming large "troupes") comprises many seemingly diverse species: blackbirds,

grackles, orioles, meadowlarks, cowbirds, and the bobolink. Lesser-known birds such as troupials, oropendolas, and caciques live in the American tropics. They differ in colors, size (6 1/2 to 21 inches long), and habits.

During the Christmas Bird Count, I can count on finding a Brewer's in our supermarket parking lot, strutting about with short forward jerks of its head. The males are an iridescent purple and green on black, and gaze with bright yellow eyes. Females are medium gray-brown above, lighter brown below and have

brown eyes. As we might expect, these sociable birds nest in colonies, building nests of pine needles, twigs, grasses, and sometimes mud or cow dung, lined with horsehair. They will nest on the ground in hayfields or in marshes, creeksides bushes, and trees, almost anywhere up to an altitude of 10,000 feet. Their 5-6 eggs are incubated by the female for 12-14 days, and the young fledge in two weeks or so. A male may have more than one mate but will guard all his nests.

Some ornithologists think that the red-winged blackbird is THE most numerous land bird in North America. We have all observed them staking out an obvious perch from which to dazzle a passing female: the tip of a cattail, the tippy-top of a shrub or reed, a telephone wire, a fence post. From there the male blurts out his strident "o-ka-leeee" interspersed with an unmusical "chack". The flashes of the red epaulets on his shoulders serve notice that he is available. The yellow border below the red adds a nice touch. The plain brown female can't help but be impressed.

Their territories cannot be too large, if the spacing along roadsides is any indication. And these males are polygamous, dividing their time among several wives. They nest in cattails, rushes, bushes, trees, even on the ground. The four eggs hatch after 10-11

days and the young, born blind and naked, leave the nest only 10 days later, after climbing among the cattails before they can fly. If they fall into the water, they can swim, but they are often caught by bullfrogs, water snakes, or turtles.

A common sight on a sunny day is a group of Brewer's blackbirds lying about on their sides, wings outstretched, seemingly zoned out. I've almost stepped on them! Apparently they are not only enjoying the warmth of the sun's rays, but are also stimulating the vitamin D production in their skin, feathers, and oil glands by ultraviolet radiation. Also, heat and light cause the parasites of the bird's skin and feathers to move to the bird's head or under its wings, making them easier to remove by either scratching or preening. Birds that are molting particularly enjoy sun bathing, as it gives them some comfort. It is also thought that energy from solar radiation can reduce and, therefore, save the energy a bird requires from its food.

In an attempt to classify blackbirds as pesky because of their huge numbers, I expected to find that they were closely-related to starlings. Instead, I found that they are most like tanagers, finches, and weaverbirds. I learned from my reading to appreciate blackbirds. I will no longer think of them as a hoard of feathered locusts. I hope you'll do the same. And watch your step on a sunny day!



# Credit Not Given

*Continued from page 1*

Three of the species first discovered by Lewis were not given scientific descriptions or names until 1858: Pacific Loon, White-fronted Goose, and Western Grebe.

## What Happened?

After the expedition was successfully completed, Lewis was expected to undertake a publication, as he had been instructed by President Jefferson. Clark had contributed daily notes that covered several lengthy hiatuses in Lewis's own journals. Several other members of the expedition also kept journals. Thus the expedition records were remarkably rich and complete.

Arriving back on the East Coast, Lewis turned to Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton for help. By the time Lewis returned from the west, however, Dr. Barton was sick with TB. There is no evidence that he ever did any work to extract the new scientific information from the journals. He never published a single species description from the wealth of Lewis's fieldwork.

After the expedition, President Jefferson appointed Lewis governor of the new Missouri Territory, necessitating Lewis's return to St. Louis. Once there, his time was filled with political issues and fur-trade speculation. It left little time to deal with publication of the journal. Even Jefferson began to lose patience with his protégé.

Lewis inexplicably never hired an editor to go through the jour-

nals systematically, even though he had quickly found a Philadelphia publisher eager to print the journals, and a three-volume set was proposed and publicized.

Beset by personal debts and drinking heavily, Lewis left St. Louis late in 1809 bound for the east. He died from apparently self-inflicted gunshot wounds in a grubby trail-



side tavern in Tennessee on October 11. Ornithologist Alexander Wilson visited the site years later and concluded that Lewis had been murdered and robbed. Yet William Clark and Thomas Jefferson, who knew the adult Lewis better than anybody else, never doubted that it was a suicide. Jefferson himself described Lewis as a man beset by hypochondria, depression, and alcoholism.

Thus it was William Clark who, in 1810, finally set a talented but limited editor, Nicholas Biddle, to


work on publication of the journals. Though he largely ignored Lewis and Clark's scientific findings, Biddle labored two years with no pay, and produced a narrative based on their journals.

By then it was 1812 and the U.S. was at war with Britain. The original publisher became bankrupt by the war. The manuscript languished until a new publisher could be found in 1814. But by then, eight years after the expedition, there was little public interest in the journals. Fewer than 1500 were printed and not many ever sold.

Finally, in 1904, an eight-volume edition of the Lewis and Clark journals appeared to mark the centennial of the expedition's beginning. At that time it became clear to science how detailed and fine Lewis's observations had been. He was the first to note the tendency of the Poorwill to become dormant in cold weather, modern science did not confirm that until a century after Lewis died. Lewis's complete accounts of the grizzly, pronghorn, bighorn and coyote are classics of accurate observation and careful writing.

Though many of the plants Lewis collected still exist in U.S. museum botanical collections, there is only one known bird skin left from the Lewis and Clark expedition. It is the prized possession of Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology. It is the skin of a Lewis's Woodpecker.

# Nominations to the GGAS Board

The GGAS Board of Directors is pleased to present to you its nominations to the GGAS Board of Directors for 1998/99. Please fill out the ballot below and send it to the GGAS Office, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94792, before May 20. 

BALLOT	TERM	CANDIDATE	YES	NO
President	2-Year	Alan Hopkins	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
First Vice President	2-Year			
Officers	1-Year			
Recording Secretary	1-Year	Leslie Lethridge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding Secretary	1-Year	Pat Gannon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treasurer				
Director At Large	1-Year	Debey Zito	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Directors	3-Year	Hugh Cotter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3-Year	Leora Feeney	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3-Year	Carolyn Kolka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Pease Take Your Seat

The Golden Gate Audubon Society has found itself with three vacant chairs at the board table and is looking for enthusiastic people to fill them. These are three great opportunities to volunteer with GGAS, and be part of its decision-making body.

### TREASURER:

Do you like numbers? Good! As the Society's Treasurer, you will oversee the financial transactions of GGAS, as well as balance


the check book and prepare a yearly budget.

### EDUCATION:

One of the main goals of GGAS is not only to conserve and protect wildlife, but also to educate the public, especially children, as we do. As the Education Chair, you will maintain any existing programs and use your creativity to help formulate any new ways to connect GGAS and the public through education.

### MEMBERSHIP:

What would we be without our members? Obviously they are the most important part of GGAS, and as the Membership Chair, you will create ways to better serve our current membership and to attract new ones. A great outlet for creativity!

If any of these opportunities sound right for you please let us know! Just call Debey Zito at (415) 282-0261. 

# The True Sign of Spring

by John Gibbons

**A**t Stow Lake in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, it's the heron, not the stork, that brings the babies! Just as expected, the Great Blue Herons of Stow Lake have returned to raise another family. And although off to a slow start with only one nest, the outlook is hopeful.

As we go to press, there are at least two newly-hatched chicks on Heron Island in Golden Gate Park. Although there is only one active nest so far, the nesting activity is easily seen by observers from the lake's path. "This is the most accessible rookery by far," said Nancy DeStefanis, Site Coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory. "The herons are using the nest that they built back in 1993 and it's the most visible of all the nests they have built on the island."

Those of you who have followed this story will remember that a total of eight healthy chicks fledged last year from two nests

on the island, making 1997 the most successful year so far. But not being in the business of breaking records, everyone involved is simply excited that this season is off to a good start with the one returning pair. Things were not always so optimistic, however, since the new year began with "Nest #2" falling into a paddleboat. The nest was rescued by Jeff Fones of Stow Lake Boat Rentals and given to DeStefanis. "I offered it to Audubon Canyon Ranch and they were delighted to have it as an exhibit for all the school children who visit the Ranch during the year."

But before the nest goes to the ranch, you will have your own chance to see it up close and learn all about the heron history of Stow Lake from DeStefanis herself! She will be narrating Judy Irving's new short film "Heron Island" at a special program of the Golden Gate Audubon Society.

She will also talk about the current season and answer questions about the Great Blues nesting at the lake, and conclude with the accordion rendition of a song she co-wrote, "My Blue Herons." Come early to view the heron nest, bones, feathers, and other exhibits. It's guaranteed to be a fun and informative evening!

**Thursday, June 6  
7:30 p.m.  
Josephine Randall  
Museum  
San Francisco**

## Gifts and Bequests

IBM International Foundation, Mignonet Montez, Ron Morrison, W.E. & J.B. Siri, Richard Sproul, George & Helene Strauss, Fred & Mildred Twining, Russell & Dorothy Wilson

### Least Tern Circle:

John & Janette Dang, Monica Fletcher & Stephen Evans, Margaret Stuart Graupner

### Birds of Honor:

Richard & Margaret Pauletich in honor of a Hermit/Townsend's Warbler hybrid

### The Alemeda National Wildlife Refuge:

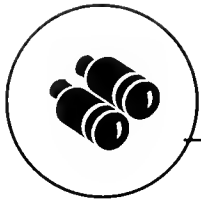
The Berkeley Garden Club

### In Memorium:

Jean Vieten in memory of David Tobias  
Rhoda Weber in memory of Grace Patch

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.





March 1 - 28, 1998

Rare bird reports were scanty this month, at least in part due to the continued rainy weather: many Northern California locations had close to 200% of average rainfall for the date by the end of March, and access to many favorite birding areas, such as the Panoche Valley in San Benito county, was still limited. March is also a transitional period, with winter birds moving out, as spring arrivals begin to increase. Several rarities reported during the last few months continued in their locations, and the end of the observation period and the beginning of spring saw the return of numerous migrants and the onset of nesting for many species.

### Loons to Ducks

The Monterey Bay **Yellow-billed Loon** reported since last fall remained offshore at Otter Point, MTY, as of Mar. 19 (per MPRBA). The Laysan Albatross visiting Pt. Arena, MEN, was still

present as of Mar. 1 and 4 (SK,GS). If recent years are any indication, this observation may be the last until fall for this bird. Another Laysan Albatross was near Pt. Pinos, MTY, Mar. 19, close enough to be viewed from shore (MPRBA). A flock of Northern Fulmars was at Monterey Harbor, MTY, Mar 16 and 28 (BR and MPRBA). A male "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal was found at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Mar. 4 (KH). A few Eurasian Wigeons continued in MTY and MRN counties (MPRBA, MH). A male Tufted Duck remained at Bolinas Lagoon, MRN, Mar.1 and 4 (MH, KH), a female was seen Mar. 16 at Schoellenberger Park (AW), and a pair in MTY Co. Mar. 11 (MPRBA). The Monterey Fisherman's Wharf, MTY, still harbored a male Harlequin Duck as of Mar. 28 (MPRBA). A beautifully-plumaged Oldsquaw lingered at Moss Landing, MTY Mar. 3-7 (BR, MPRBA), and another individual was at Schoellenberger Park, SON, Mar. 2 (GF). Two White-winged Scoters were at the San Luis Reservoir, MER, Mar. 6, no doubt driven inland due to stormy weather (ST).

### Raptors to Skimmers

Again this year, nesting Bald Eagles were sighted Mar. 23 at Del Valle Reservoir, ALA (JMo), indicating that this species is becoming re-established in the East Bay. Other raptor reports of interest were two Swainson's Hawks in YOL Co. Mar. 16 (EG) and a nest-building Swainson's at Rock

Slough Bridge, CC, Mar. 26 (SG), reportedly one of very few nesting records for the county. The Rock Sandpiper present most of the winter on the SCZ coast, SCZ, remained through the month (MR, MPRBA). Another individual was found again at MacKerricher State Park, MEN, Mar. 14 (DT). 150 Mountain Plovers were counted in YOL Co. Mar. 13 (TW). Lower Stoney Reservoir, MTY, hosted 120 Common Snipe Mar. 28 (MPRBA).

The first winter Laughing Gull originally reported at the gull roost on Moss Landing, MTY, in late January, remained until at least Mar. 21 (DH, MPRBA). The controversial, presumptive first winter "**Kumlien's**" **Iceland Gull** remained at Moss Landing, MTY, through at least Mar. 11 (JA, MPRBA). The probable immature (first-winter) **Lesser Black-backed Gull** first reported in October stayed at L. Cunningham, San Jose, SCL, up until at least Mar. 4 (MR). At the same location, the second-winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was observed again Mar. 6 (GF). Four individual Glaucous Gulls occurred in MTY, SCL, SOL, and YOL counties (DH, GF, ME, SH). Black-legged Kittiwakes were found on all areas of the MTY coast over the period (JM, MPRBA). The first Caspian Terns of the year arrived Mar. 22 at Lake Merced, SF (HC). The 13 Black Skimmers remained in SCL Co. as of Mar. 25 (PS).

### Owls to Buntings

A Northern Pigmy Owl, rare for the Sacramento Valley, was

**Abbreviations for Observers:** JA, Jean Adams; AC, Anthony Cermak; LC, Les Chibana; HC, Hugh Cotter; ME, Mark Eaton; GF, George Finger; SG, Steve Glover; CG, Chris Grabel; EG, Ed Greaves; SH, Steve Hampton; KH, Keith Hansen; MH, Mary Havman; DH, Donna Heim; SK, Sandy Koonce; JM, John Meyer; JMo, Joe Morlan; CN, Christy Nelson; BR, Bob Reiling; MR, Mike Rogers; PS, Peter Schenck; DS, Doug Shaw; GS, Grace Steuer; ST, Scott Terrill; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; TW, Terry Weinberger; AW, Alan White.

**Abbreviations for Counties and Others:** ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HU, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; MTY, Monterey; SAC, Sacramento; SBT, San Benito; SF, San Francisco; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo.

seen in Cold Canyon Reserve, SOL, Mar. 16 (EG). A female Black-Chinned Hummingbird was near Stone Rd., Bethel Island, CC, Mar. 26 (SG). The Eastern Phoebe stayed at Shady Oaks Park, San Jose, SCL, as of Mar. 4 (MR) and a second individual was found near Hwy. 12, SON, Mar. 1 (CG). The **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** remained at Neary's Lagoon, SCZ, as of Mar. 14 (MPRBA), where it had been since early December. Western Kingbirds had returned to S. MTY Co. as of Mar. 28 (MPRBA). Other sure signs of spring were all of the expected returning swallow species (except for Purple Martins) in MTY Co. by Mar. 19 (MPRBA). By Mar. 1, Cliff Swallows had returned to SOL Co. (ME) and Purple Martins had come back to their traditional spot underneath US 50 at 34th and T Streets in Sacramento, SAC, Mar. 16 (EG). A Sage Thrasher was found at the Arcata Marsh Project, HUM, Mar. 2 (CN). Warbling Vireos also heralded spring in MTY Co. Mar. 19 (per MPRBA). Unusual Wood Warblers continued to be very sparse this month, although common species such as Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers had returned to the MTY area by mid-March (MPRBA). The only unusual warbler report was that of the continuing Prothonotary Warbler, with possibly two individuals at N. Lake, SF, Mar. 14 (AC), and a single bird was at the same location Mar. 16 (DS). Two Lark Buntings were sighted at Silver Creek Ranch, SBT, Mar. 14 (LC).

## Redtails In Love

The Golden Gate Raptor Observatory invites you to an evening of tales of the mysteries of urban wildlife. Come to a facinating slide show about, among other things, the Redtail Hawks in New York City's Central Park as told by

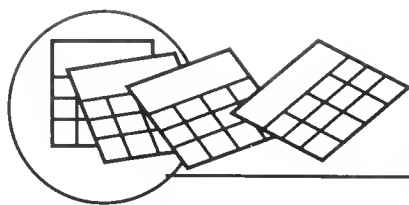
Marie Winn, author of the new book *Redtails in Love*. The show will be held on May 7th at 7 p.m. at the Marin Headlands Visitor Center. For more information and directions call (415) 331-1540.

## Get Involved in a Long Distance Relationship

Many of our avian neighbors have finally returned from their winter vacations in Panama. To find out what they were doing and what their human friends down there are doing to help them, take advantage of a great opportunity and join the Panama Committee! This is a chance to be part of a rare and special relationship between Audubon Chapters who may not share the same country, but do

share the same environmental issues since we "share" the same migratory birds.

Miles McKey, chairman, would like to invite anyone who is interested to join him for the next meeting of the Panama Committee. It will be held on **June 8 at 7:30 p.m.** at Miles' house: 76 Hillcrest Road, Berkeley. For more information call Miles at (510) 652-5854. Everyone is welcome.

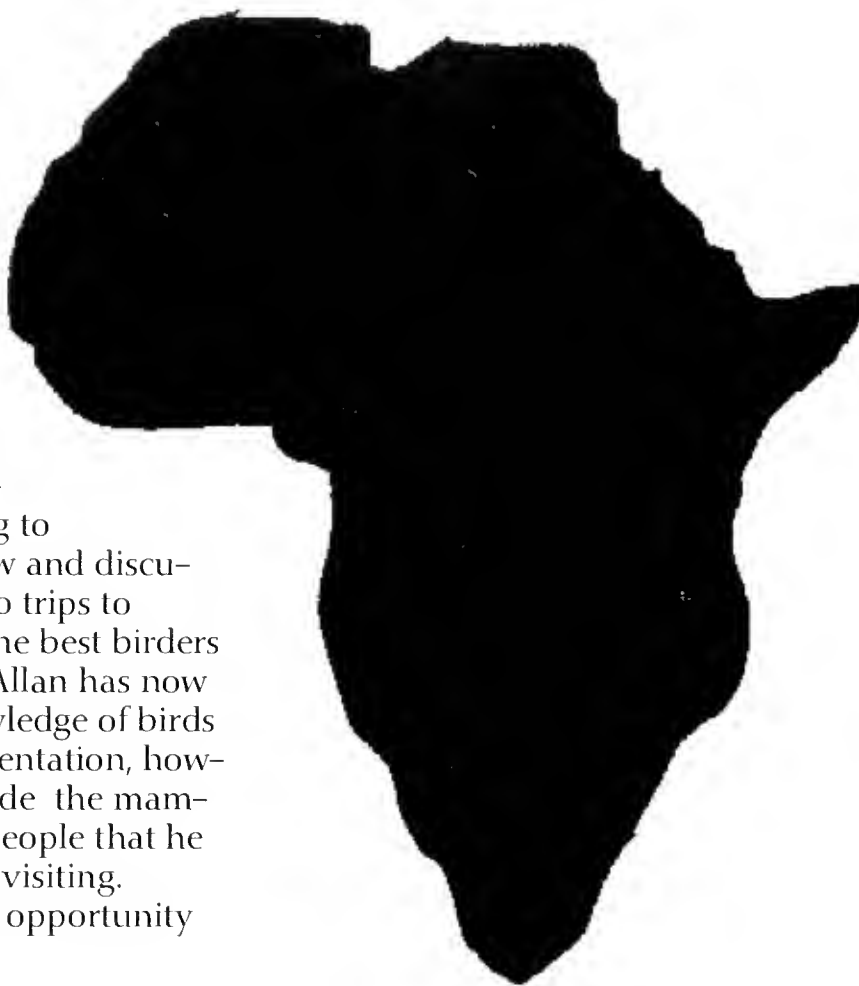


## May Meeting

### Out of Africa

Still very busy planning this year's trip to East Africa, Allan Hopkin's will be joining us at our next monthly program meeting to present a slide show and discussion on his last two trips to Kenya. As one of the best birders on the west coast, Allan has now expanded his knowledge of birds to Kenya. The presentation, however, will also include the mammals, insects, and people that he encountered while visiting.

It will be a good opportunity



Thursday, May 21

7:30 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church

941 The Alameda, Berkeley

to learn what a visitor can really expect to see and do on safari. So join us for this exotic escape to Africa without the flies and dry heat.



#### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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